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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted in the San Diego Community College District to evaluate English placement test data for a correlation between test scores and grades in English courses districtwide and to evaluate placement test cutoff scores. Following from Phase I of the project which involved a pilot study conducted at Mesa College between fall 1982 and spring 1983, Phase II included all three campuses in the district and increased the sample size to 6,099 students. Statistical analyses were conducted to determine correlations among the following variables: placement test scores, final grades in English courses in fall 1983, and specified demographic data (i.e., age, gender, ethnicity, high school graduation status, and campus of enrollment). Study findings included the following: (1) Business English 52 was the only course which exhibited a meaningful correlation between placement test scores and final grade in the course; (2) students under 20 years of age had the lowest mean English course grade, but the second highest reading and grammar test scores of all age groups; and (3) extreme variations in grading by the instructors may have been the primary reason for a weak correlation throughout the district. Based on study findings, it was recommended that the number of placement categories be reduced, security measures be developed and enforced for the testing process, course outlines be reviewed and aligned, the cutoff scores be revised, and the placement test be reviewed. (HB)

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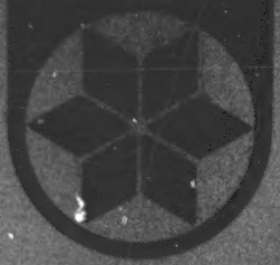

PHASE II
THE ENGLISH PLACEMENT TEST: A CORRELATION ANALYSIS

April, 1984

RESEARCH & PLANNING

The San Diego Community College District

3375 Camino del Rio South, San Diego, CA 92108

JC 840 341

PHASE II ENGLISH PLACEMENT TEST:

A Correlation Analysis

Conducted for:

San Diego Community College District

Lynn Ceresino Neault
Administrator Analyst

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**Prepared by:
Research and Planning
April, 1984**

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INTRODUCTION

The ongoing concern for placement testing prevails. Several facets of the District have joined forces in an attempt to evaluate the placement test instrument as well as its function and purpose. This study is a continuation of Phase I - the pilot study conducted at Mesa College, Fall 1982 - Spring 1983. The purpose of the study is to evaluate the English placement test data for a correlation between test scores and grades in English courses districtwide; and to evaluate present cutoff scores.

The scope of Phase II is broader than Phase I in that it includes students from all three (3) campuses. The size of the sample group has increased to 6,099 students. A breakdown of the sample group is as follows:

TOTAL STUDENTS	6,099
CITY COLLEGE	2,503
MESA COLLEGE	3,096
MIRAMAR COLLEGE	500

METHODOLOGY

1. A computer program was written to extrapolate the appropriate data:

   Placement test scores

   Corresponding final grades in English courses
   Fall, 1983

   Corresponding specified demographic data

2. The sample group was formulated in the data base consisting of 6,099 students from all three (3) campuses. The only students included in the sample group were those with placement test scores and a corresponding grade in an English course, Fall 1983.

3. As with Phase I, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was the program used for the analysis.

LIMITATIONS

1. Accuracy of the placement test score data is dependent upon the individuals scoring the test and inputing the scores into the computer.

2. Accuracy of the data base is dependent upon the accuracy of the computer program.

3. Determination of "academic success" via a grade is a subjective measurement.

4. Placement tests are not necessarily a predictor of academic success.

FACTS AND FINDINGS

The analysis contained herein is based on four statistical tests:

Crosstabulation

A comparison of the distribution of pairs of corresponding variables such as:

Grade and test score

Grade and demographic group

Test score and demographic group

Pearson product-moment correlation

Measures the strength of association among two variables (in this case, grade and test score) to determine if there is a meaningful correlation.

Oneway Analysis of Variance and Sheffe Tests

Allows one to statistically test whether the means (averages) of certain subgroups are significantly different from each other at the .05 confidence level.

Results By Course

English 101 - Unlike Phase I, English 101 did not exhibit a meaningful correlation between grades and test scores, districtwide or by campus. There were 1,832 students in the sample group enrolled in English 101; 993 of which were used for the correlation analysis (only those students receiving a grade of "A - F").

Additional tests were conducted on the mean (average) grades for test scores ranging from 16 to 32, to test the appropriateness of the cutoff scores. The results show that there was not a significant difference between the mean grades of students scoring 16 to 32 on both the grammar and reading tests. (See page 9)

English 100 - The sample size for English 100 was too small to be of any significance. There were only 20 students districtwide who had taken the placement test and received an "A - F" in English 100. Seventy percent (70%) of those students were enrolled at City College and received a higher mean grade (3.79) than any other group tested. Additionally, it should be noted that English 100 had the highest average grade (3.50) of all English courses included in the review. (See page 14)

Results By Course (cont)

English 70 - The sample group for English 70 consisted of 329 students, 168 of which were used for the correlation analysis. The results indicate that a meaningful correlation does not exist between grades and test scores. An analysis of the mean grades of those students scoring 16 to 32 on the tests, indicates that there was not a difference in the mean grades of those students scoring 22 to 28 in grammar and those students scoring 16 to 22 in reading. (See page 10)

English 61 - English 61 is offered for credit/no credit only. There were 62 students enrolled in English 61 who had taken the placement test. The results of the analysis conclude that a meaningful correlation did not exist between test scores and the students receiving credit and those not receiving credit for the course.

English 51 - There were 268 students enrolled in English 51 who had taken the placement test; of that group, 151 students received an "A - F" in the course and served as the sample group for the correlation analysis. Ninety-eight percent (98%) of these students were enrolled at Mesa College. The correlation was weak between performance in the course and test scores, particularly for the reading test.

Results By Course (cont)

English 50 - The student sample group for English 50 included 1,580 students, 862 of which received "A - F" in the course. The analysis proved that a meaningful correlation did not exist between grades and test scores on either the grammar or the reading test.

Statistical tests were conducted on the mean grades for students scoring 16 to 30 on the grammar and reading tests to evaluate cutoff scores. The results show a **significant difference between the mean grade of those scoring 16 and/or 17 on the grammar test and the mean grade of those scoring 28 on the grammar test.** There was not a significant difference in the mean grades for the same range of test scores on the reading test. (See page 11)

English 32 - Business English 32 was the only course which exhibited a meaningful correlation between placement test scores and final grade in the course. There were 195 students enrolled, 108 of which received an "A - F" in the course.

The correlation coefficients for English 32 were as follows:

		COEFFICIENTS	
SITE	N =	GRAMMAR	READING
CITY	74	.505	.339
MESA	30	.516	.420
MIRAMAR	4	N/A	N/A
DISTRICTWIDE	108	.413	.301

Results By Course (cont)

At Mesa College there was a strong association between test scores on both tests and final grades in the course. At City College and districtwide, the grammar score demonstrated a strong correlation, however the correlation for the reading test was not as strong. Unfortunately, the sample at Miramar College included only 4 students, thus an analysis would not be of any significance.

Tests were performed to measure the difference in the mean grades of those students scoring 17 to 32 on both tests for English 32. The sample size of the subgroups (mean grade for each test score) was too small to provide meaningful data. (See page 12)

The tables on the following pages illustrate the mean grades for students scoring in a specified range on the grammar and reading tests for English 101, 70, 50, and 32, as discussed in the preceding pages. As was previously stated, English 50 was the only course which demonstrated a significant difference between the mean grades of a certain range of test scores.

MEAN GRADES

English 101

N = 993

SCORE	MEAN GRADE	
	GRAMMAR	READING
16	2.17	2.70
17	2.22	2.06
18	2.23	2.25
19	2.24	2.54
20	1.78	2.25
21	2.09	2.42
22	2.03 cutoff	2.08
23	2.38	2.19 cutoff
24	2.16	2.32
25	2.20	2.18
26	2.47	2.27
27	2.51	2.46
28	2.17	2.46
29	2.62	2.47
30	2.62	2.51
31	2.64	2.69
32	2.54	2.73

Differences Between Groups

No significant difference between groups

MEAN GRADES

English 70

N = 168

SCORE	MEAN GRADE	
	GRAMMAR	READING
16	*	2.63
17	*	2.77
18	*	2.53
19	*	2.93
20	*	2.74
21	* cutoff	2.56
22	2.55	2.14 cutoff
23	2.56	*
24	2.27	*
25	2.62	*
26	2.69	*
27	2.30	*
28	2.79	*
29		*
30		*

Differences Between Groups

No significant difference between groups

*** Too small of a sub-group to be meaningful**

MEAN GRADES

English 50

N = 862

SCORE	MEAN GRADE	
	GRAMMAR	READING
16	1.96*	2.35
17	2.03*	2.34
18	2.41	1.93
19	2.40	2.32
20	2.16	2.42
21	2.33 cutoff	2.20
22	2.56	2.39 cutoff
23	2.30	2.44
24	2.25	2.27
25	2.73	2.35
26	2.29	2.50
27	3.10	3.00
28	3.57*	3.00
29	3.00	2.10
30	3.00	2.80

Differences Between Groups

* Significant difference between mean grades of a grammar score of 16 and/or 17 and a grammar score of 28

No difference

MEAN GRADES

English 32

N = 108

SCORE	MEAN GRADE	
	GRAMMAR	READING
17	1.9	3.0
18	2.7	3.0
19	2.3	2.0
20	1.6	2.0
21	2.5 cutoff	1.0
22	3.4	3.0 cutoff
23	2.7	0.7
24	2.3	2.0
25	3.5	3.4
26	2.7	3.0
27	2.5	3.5
28	.0	3.0
29	3.5	1.0
30	2.5	2.6
31	2.3	2.6
32	3.5	3.0

Differences Between Groups

Sample size of subgroups (mean grades for each test score) too small to be meaningful

FACTS AND FINDINGS (cont)

The tables which follow are a summary of the results by English course at each site and districtwide.

The first table (page 14) displays the mean test scores and grades for only those students who received an "A - F" in the course. **This group of students was tested for the correlation analysis.**

The second table (page 15) lists the mean grammar and reading test scores as well as the total number of students at each site. This table includes those students who received drops, withdrawals, incompletes and such, and is representative of the entire sample group (all students who tested and enrolled in an English course, Fall 1983).

A cursory review of the mean test scores indicates that the group of students on the second table, which includes those with drops and withdrawals, have noticeably lower mean test scores overall than the group of students on the first table who received an "A - F" in English.

STUDENTS RECEIVING "A THROUGH F" IN ENGLISH

ENGLISH COURSE	SITE	NUMBER	MEAN GRAMMAR SCORE	MEAN READING SCORE	MEAN GRADE
32	ALL	108	19.72	16.61	2.10
	MESA	30	23.83	20.53	1.80
	CITY	74	18.53	15.32	2.20
	MIRAMAR	4	11.00	11.00	2.50
33*					
50	ALL	862	18.58	16.51	2.24
	MESA	458	19.22	17.63	2.30
	CITY	328	17.99	14.57	2.20
	MIRAMAR	76	17.24	18.11	2.01
51	ALL	151	24.13	18.45	2.74
	MESA	147	24.25	18.54	2.75
	CITY	2	21.50	18.00	2.50
	MIRAMAR	2	18.00	12.50	2.00
61	ALL	62	14.34	11.29	Offered
	MESA	27	13.37	9.82	Credit/
	CITY	23	14.09	10.78	No Credit
	MIRAMAR	12	17.00	15.58	Only
70	ALL	168	24.02	18.08	2.54
	MESA	98	24.41	18.02	2.48
	CITY	64	23.42	17.67	2.66
	MIRAMAR	6	24.00	23.50	2.33
100	ALL	20	21.40	18.50	3.50
	MESA	5	31.80	28.60	3.20
	CITY	14	17.64	14.21	3.79
	MIRAMAR	1	22.00	28.00	1.00
101	ALL	993	27.21	26.24	2.50
	MESA	643	27.41	26.31	2.47
	CITY	219	26.46	25.22	2.59
	MIRAMAR	131	27.53	27.60	2.47
All English Courses**		3076	23.19	21.01	2.50

* Sample too small to be meaningful
** Fall '83, Districtwide

ALL STUDENTS

ENGLISH COURSE	SITE	NUMBER	MEAN GRAMMAR SCORE	MEAN READING SCORE
32	ALL	195	19.25	16.42
	MESA	62	21.21	19.40
	CITY	127	18.57	15.06
	MIRAMAR	6	13.50	14.17
33*				
50	ALL	1580	18.37	16.25
	MESA	790	19.28	17.68
	CITY	662	17.55	14.38
	MIRAMAR	128	17.14	17.34
51	ALL	268	23.44	18.41
	MESA	253	23.47	18.38
	CITY	5	21.60	16.00
	MIRAMAR	10	23.50	20.40
61	ALL	62	14.34	11.29
	MESA	27	13.37	9.82
	CITY	23	14.09	10.78
	MIRAMAR	12	17.00	15.58
70	ALL	329	23.29	17.56
	MESA	169	23.66	17.97
	CITY	141	22.82	16.62
	MIRAMAR	19	23.53	20.95
100	ALL	41	23.29	21.44
	MESA	16	28.56	27.62
	CITY	24	19.83	17.04
	MIRAMAR	1	22.00	28.00
101	ALL	1832	26.66	25.59
	MESA	1113	27.12	26.07
	CITY	501	25.49	23.93
	MIRAMAR	218	26.95	26.97
All English Courses**		6099	22.30	19.96

* Sample too small to be meaningful
** Fall '83, Districtwide

Frequency Distribution

The tables on the following pages display frequency distributions -- the number of students who scored in each test score category -- for the following:

1. The Total Sample Group

2. English 101

3. English 70

4. English 50

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION

All Students

N = 6099

SCORE	GRAMMAR	READING
1	8	5
2	6	17
3	6	35
4	4	57
5	24	100
6	35	125
7	46	153
8	41	187
9	73	163
10	83	204
11	136	229
12	135	202
13	161	181
14	189	175
15	209	176
16	208	236
17	279	201
18	267	179
19	284	194
20	284	237
21	313	234
22	272	197
23	281	233
24	269	186
25	258	230
26	274	238
27	290	201
28	235	211
29	219	217
30	210	207
31	221	204
32	167	203
33	156	195
34	119	155
35	114	97
36	77	
37	51	
38	32	
39	15	
40	6	

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION

English 101 - Districtwide

N = 1832

SCORE	GRAMMAR	READING
1	1	
2		3
3		2
4		1
5		6
6	1	11
7	3	7
8	4	15
9	5	12
10	5	12
11	7	24
12	13	18
13	15	32
14	15	24
15	19	24
16	21	30
17	33	27
18	31	24
19	37	28
20	35	32
21	49 Cutoff	48
22	84	48 Cutoff
23	114	105
24	100	93
25	99	122
26	119	118
27	127	109
28	124	111
29	103	116
30	118	120
31	115	128
32	95	112
33	95	115
34	67	98
35	66	48
36	35	
37	31	
38	23	
39	8	
40	2	

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION

English 70 - Districtwide

N = 329

SCORE	GRAMMAR	READING
1		
2		
3		
4		2
5	1	8
6		6
7		4
8	1	7
9	2	7
10	1	10
11	2	9
12	2	10
13	6	11
14	7	13
15	8	17
16	9	19
17	7	20
18	8	24
19	9	28
20	5	37
21	5 Cutoff	29
22	42	28 Cutoff
23	34	4
24	37	4
25	27	6
26	22	2
27	30	4
28	21	4
29	16	5
30	7	3
31	9	1
32	3	3
33	1	1
34	2	1
35	1	1
36	1	
37	1	

FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION

English 50 - Districtwide

N = 1580

SCORE	GRAMMAR	READING
1	1	2
2		6
3	2	8
4	3	11
5	3	20
6	9	44
7	16	53
8	10	63
9	17	62
10	29	69
11	50	99
12	54	78
13	64	77
14	78	73
15	85	85
16	100	91
17	131	72
18	140	71
19	138	72
20	161	87
21	167 Cutoff	75
22	44	48 Cutoff
23	47	51
24	31	52
25	36	34
26	38	43
27	40	20
28	16	29
29	19	24
30	11	13
31	10	12
32	7	10
33	8	10
34	2	3
35	2	4
36	1	
37	1	
38		
39		
40	1	

The tables on the next six pages are frequency distributions for each test score with the corresponding grade for English 101, 70, and 50. Note that "G" represents the students' score on the grammar test and "R" represents the students' score on the reading test.

How To Interpret The Frequency Distribution Tables

- Find the test score on the far left;
- Read across for each grade (A, B, C and so on);
- The numbers listed under the "G" and "R" indicate how many students received a particular final grade for each test score (on both the grammar and reading test).

Refer to the frequency distribution tables on pages 18 - 20 for the total number of students who scored in each test score category for English 101, 70, and 50.

ENGLISH 101 - Districtwide
N = 1832
Grade Distribution By Test Score

TEST SCORE	GRADE: A		B		C		D		F		INC		DR		W		CR		NC	
	G	R	G	R	G	R	G	R	G	R	G	R	G	R	G	R	G	R	G	R
1													1							
2														2		1				
3														2						
4				1																
5				1										3		2				
6	1			2				1		1				7						
7				1		1			1				2	4		1				
8		1	1	3		3				1			1	5	2	2				
9			1	3	1	5		1				1	2		1	2				
10			1		1	2		3		1				4	3	2				
11		1	2	2		6	1	1		1			3	9	1	4				
12	1	3	2	5	3	1						1	5	3	2	5				
13		1	3	4	2	6		3	1			1	7	10	2	7				
14	1	1	3	2	3	4	1	2				1	5	8	2	6				
15			1	3	3	7	3	1		2			5	8	7	3				
16		1	2	5	3	4	1					1	11	11	4	8				
17			3	6	5	7	1	3		1	4		8	5	12	5				
18	2	1	4	3	7	7	4			1		1	10	6	4	5				
19	2	2	7	4	3	4	3		2	1	1	2	11	11	8	4				
20	2	2	1	4	9	3	3	1	3	2	3	2	5	9	9	9				
21 Cutoff Grammar		3	8	11	11	11	2	1	2	2	3	3	13	6	10	11				
22 Cutoff Reading	2	1	12	7	15	12	5	3	5	2	4	3	17	9	24	11				

22

ENGLISH 101 - Districtwide
N = 1832
Grade Distribution By Test Score

TEST SCORE	GRADE: A G	A R	B G	B R	C G	C R	D G	D R	F G	F R	INC G	INC R	DR G	DR R	W G	W R	CR G	CR R	NC G	NC R
23	7	4	19	23	20	21	4	5	4	7	1	2	26	11	33	32				
24	3	5	19	17	26	14	4	8	6	2	2	5	19	16	21	26				
25	6	4	13	29	24	28	2	8	6	7	2	5	23	18	23	23				
26	7	5	26	19	24	23	4	4	3	5	3	3	23	23	29	36				
27	10	12	23	18	23	25	3	6	4	3	3	2	25	14	36	29				
28	9	11	27	26	18	12	10	4	11	8	10	3	10	17	29	30				
29	13	11	26	20	15	21	5	5	4	4	4	2	13	22	23	30				1
30	10	8	28	24	23	24	3	4	2	2	2	3	18	21	31	34			1	
31	16	14	24	42	18	13	6	5	3	5	3	4	21	23	24	22				
32	9	17	30	29	18	14	3	3	5	5	2	4	10	16	18	24				
33	17	26	22	27	6	11	3	5	3	5	3	1	12	14	29	26				
34	17	25	21	16	4	10	2			4	2	5	9	16	12	22				
35	14	16	16	6	9	5	2		2	1	1	1	13	5	9	14				
36	8		8		3				1				5		10					
37	11		4		2				1				4		9					
38	4		1		1		1		2		2		5		7					
39	2		2						1				1	1	2					
40	1												1							
TOTAL:	175		364		304		77		73		56		345		437				1	

ENGLISH 70 - Districtwide
N = 329
Grade Distribution By Test Score

TEST SCORE	A G	A R	B G	B R	C G	C R	D G	D R	F G	F R	INC G	INC R	DR G	DR R	W G	W R	CR G	CR R	NC G	NC R
1																				
2																				
3																				
4						1										1				
5						3		2				1	1	1		1				
6				1		1								3		1				
7						1								3						
8				1	1	2								1		3				
9				1							1		1	4		2				
10				2		2						1		5	1					
11		1			1	1						2	1	1		4				
12				1		3							1	5	1	1				
13					1	2		1		1	1			4	4	3				
14				2	1	2	2	1						2	4	6				
15			1	5	1	4	1				1		3	3	1	5				
16		2	1	7	2	3		1			1		4	3	1	3				
17	1	2		2	2	5		1					2	7	2	3				
18	1	2	2	7	1	4		1		1	1		2	4	1	5				
19		8		1	2	4	1	1				1	4	9	2	4				
20		8	1	5	1	9		2				1	2	5	1	7				
21		3	1	9		4	1	1		1		1	1	7	2	3				

ENGLISH 70 - Districtwide
N = 329
Grade Distribution By Test Score

GRADE:	A		B		C		D		F		INC		DR		W		CR		NC	
TEST SCORE	G	R	G	R	G	R	G	R	G	R	G	R	G	R	G	R	G	R	G	R
22	3	2	12	6	6	4	1	2	2	2			11	5	7	7				
23	2		7		8	1	1	1			1		7	1	8	1				
24	5		7		8		2		3	1	1	2	6		5	1				
25	2	1	8	2	5		1	1			1		4	2	6					
26	4	1	3		5		2						5	1	3					
27	2		4	1	1		4				1		11	1	7	2				
28	5		3	1	7								4	2	2	1				
29	1	1	2	1	3	1		1	1				5	1	4					
30	1		1		1	1							2		2	2				
31	2		2										3		2	1				
32	2												1	2		1				
33					1									1						
34		1			1								1							
35	1					1														
36													1							
37															1					
TOTAL:	32		55		59		16		6		9		84		68					

ENGLISH 50 - Districtwide
N = 1580
Grade Distribution By Test Score

TEST SCORE	GRADE: A G	A R	B G	B R	C G	C R	D G	D R	F G	F R	INC G	INC R	DR G	DR R	W G	W R	NC G	NC R	CR G	CR R
1										1				1	1					
2		1		1		2		1						1						
3				1		1							1	2	1	4				
4	1		1	1		2				1				3	1	4				
5		2		3		2			1	1			2	8		4				
6		1		6	3	7		6		3			4	14	2	7				
7	1	1	1	4	1	11	2	7	1	3			7	18	3	9				
8		3	3	10	1	13		6	1	4			4	16	1	11				
9	1	2	2	3	2	12	2	6	3	7		1	6	18	1	13				
10	1	4	4	11	6	11	1	3		5			12	25	5	10				
11	1	4	6	17	9	15	4	10	4	5		1	14	26	12	21				
12	1	3	6	14	11	14	4	5	6	6			15	15	11	21				
13	3	4	9	11	9	14	6	2	4	7		5	18	16	15	18				
14	5	6	10	11	20	21	7	5	5	1		2	18	15	13	12				
15	1	7	12	12	20	21	7	2	6	1		2	22	17	17	23				
16	4	5	10	21	25	22	6	8	6	2	1		22	16	26	17				
17	6	4	22	18	21	16	14	2	9	4	2		29	15	28	13				
18	6	1	35	8	29	24	8	5	3	4	1	1	27	14	31	14				
19	11	7	23	11	33	18	7	5	4	3	5		29	16	26	12				
20	9	7	28	19	45	14	12	8	9	2	2		28	17	28	20				
21	12	4	29	12	35	16	12	6	5	3	2		43	16	29	18				

ENGLISH 50 - Districtwide
N = 1580
Grade Distribution By Test Score

TEST SCORE	A G	A R	B G	B R	C G	C R	D G	D R	F G	F R	INC G	INC R	DR G	DR R	W G	W R	NC G	NC R	CR G	CR R
22	6	4	6	8	9	12	5	3					11	14	7	7				
23	3	2	7	10	13	11	3	1	1	1	1		10	12	9	14				
24		5	6	4	3	10	3	7			1	2	7	15	11	9				
25	4	2	5	9	4	4	3	4		1		1	9	8	11	5				
26	3	6	6	6	11	5	3	3		2			9	11	6	10				
27	8	4	6	3	4	4	1						12	6	9	3				
28	4	3	3	4		3							7	14	2	5				
29	4	2	3	4	4	5		1		3			5	5	3	4				
30	3	2	2	4		4			1				2	3	3					
31	3	2	4	2		3		1					2	3	1	1				
32	2	3		1	2	2							3	1		3				
33	2	1		1		2		2	1				4	4	1					
34	1	1			1									1		1				
35		3				1							1		1					
36							1													
37			1																	
38																				
39																				
40													1							
TOTAL.:	106		250		322		111		73		15		387		316					

Instructor Sample

The results of Phase I of the correlation analysis conducted at Mesa College, Fall 1982 - Spring 1983, concluded that there was a meaningful correlation between grades and test scores for English 101. However, English 101 did not exhibit a similar correlation for Phase II, Fall 1983, by site or districtwide.

To investigate this discrepancy an individual analysis was conducted for English 101. Six English 101 instructors were randomly selected and their class rosters analyzed.[1] There were 232 students enrolled in the English 101 classes of these six instructors.

The results indicate that there were extreme variances in grading by the instructors which may be the primary reason for a weak correlation throughout the District.

1 (The procedure was very time consuming and could not possibly be conducted on every English 101 instructor at the time. Consequently, a sample was chosen and served as the data base for the analysis.)

FACTS AND FINDINGS (cont)

A summary of the results of the instructor group is as follows:

1. Instructor 1 had the **highest** mean test scores (29,28) and the **lowest** mean grade (1.6).

2. Instructor 6 had the **lowest** mean test scores (22,19) and the **highest** mean grade (2.71).

3. The English classes of three (3) of the instructors had a strong correlation between test scores and grades. The classes of the remaining three instructors did not correlate.

4. Instructor 1 had a drop/withdrawal rate of more than 60%.

5. The mean test scores of the five (5) grade groups were as follows:

GRADE	MEAN GRAMMAR SCORE	MEAN READING SCORE
A	31.71	29.36
B	27.81	25.83
C	25.40	24.69
D	24.62	21.92
F	33.25	29.75

As illustrated, the students receiving an "F" had the highest average grammar and reading scores, and the students with an "A" had the second highest.

The following tables illustrate the complete results of the Instructor Sample Group Analysis.

NOTE: Cutoff scores for English 101: Grammar 22 or higher
Reading 23 or higher

INSTRUCTOR SAMPLE
Students Receiving "A through F" in English 101

	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	MEAN GRAMMAR SCORE	MEAN READING SCORE	MEAN GRADE	CORRELATION
Instructor					
1	21	29.38	28.19	1.6	No
2	34	27.74	26.41	2.5	Grammar/ Reading
3	20	26.90	26.45	2.6	Grammar
4	16	27.0	25.75	1.9	No
5	32	26.25	23.88	2.7	Grammar/ Reading
6	12	22.50	19.67	2.7	No

Significant difference between the mean grade of Instructor 1 and Instructors 2,3,5,6

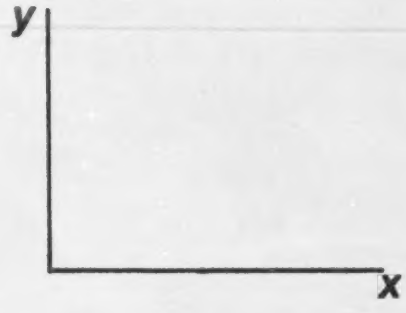
INSTRUCTOR SAMPLE
Grade Distribution - English 101

INSTRUCTOR	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	A %	B %	C %	D %	F %	INCOMP %	DROP %	W %	CR/NC %	
1	56	1.8	1.8	25.0	5.4	5.4	0	21.4	39.3	0	Highest Mean Test Scores
2	51	5.9	23.5	33.3	3.9	0	7.8	11.8	13.7	0	
3	29	3.4	31.0	34.5	0	0	3.4	13.8	13.8	0	
4	25	4.0	8.0	36.0	12.0	4.0	0	16.0	20.0	0	
5	52	15.4	23.1	13.5	9.6	0	1.9	13.5	23.1	0	
6	19	5.3	31.6	26.3	0	0	5.3	0	31.6	0	Lowest Mean Test Scores

Careful review of the instructor sample data calls attention to major discrepancies in the results. This is a problem which is beyond the scope of this report. However, grading discrepancies and course content should be investigated further.

Scattergram

A scattergram was created for English 101 to visualize the "plotting" of test scores and grades. The scattergram is broken down into six (6) "cells" as the points are plotted on the X and Y axis as diagramed below.



When the scattergram was analyzed, the "irregularities" which may have been causing a weak correlation were somewhat evident. The cell which appears to stand out is the one with high test scores and D's and F's in the course, as marked by an X below. (See scattergram on page 35)

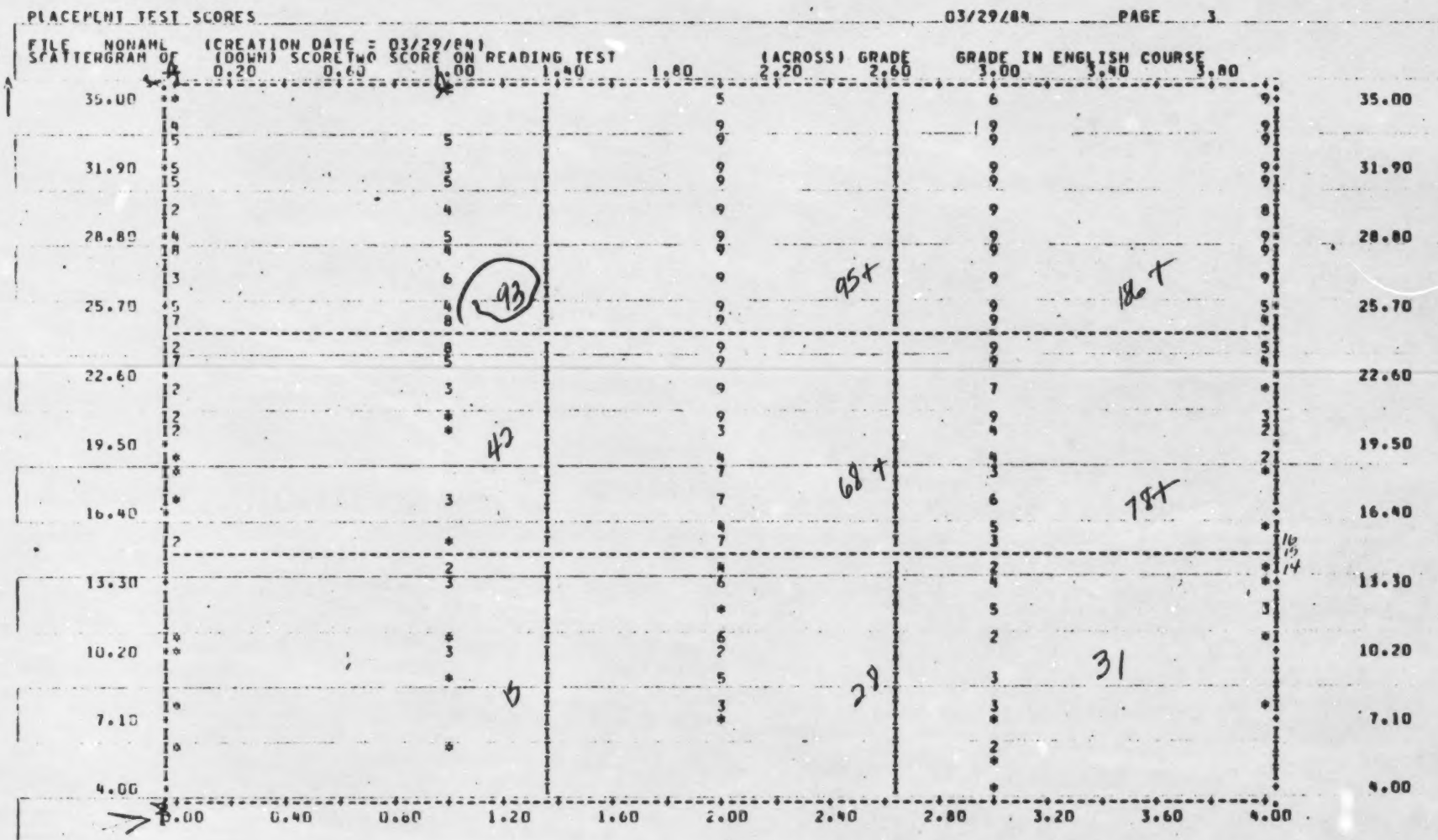
X		
Z		Y

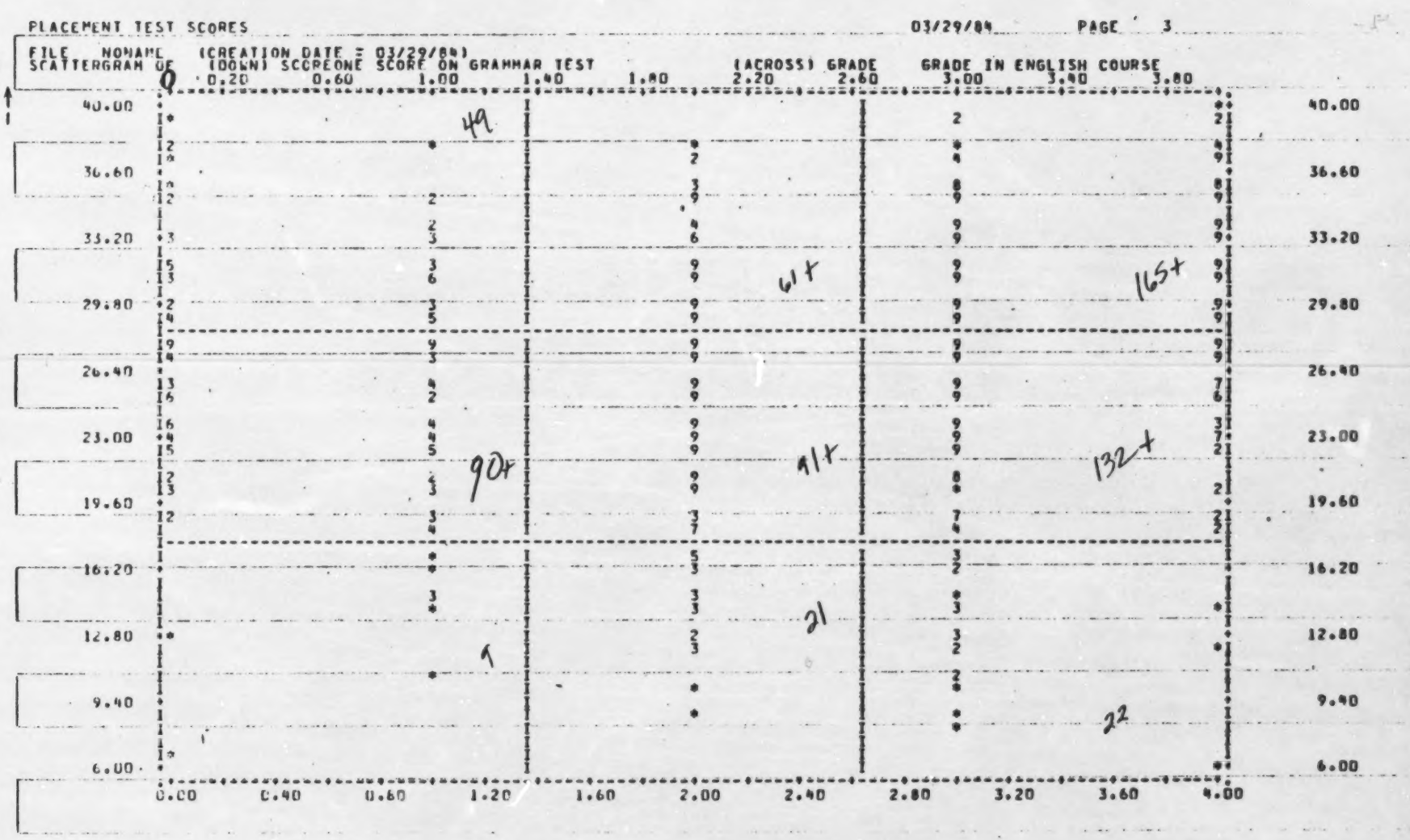
Scattergram (cont)

This cell has more than 93 students for the reading test. It is 3 times larger than the inverse cell - low test scores and high grades marked on the same diagram with a "Y" and 6 times larger than the cell with low test scores and low grades, "Z" on the diagram. Students in the low test score area may be in English 101 as a result of successfully completing prerequisite English courses. However, there is no evidence which supports the fact that they all received very low test scores and high grades. Chances are these students are dispersed throughout the lower half of the scattergram.

When the cell which appears to be scewing the results with high test scores and low grades is removed (cell X on diagram, page 33) and a correlation test is performed, the results show a substantially greater association between variables (a correlation coefficient of .38). This correlation coefficient can be interpreted as a meaningful association between grades and test scores.

The scattergrams for English 101 are listed on the following pages.


PLACEMENT TEST SCORES
03/29/84
PAGE 3
FILE NONAME (CREATION DATE = 03/29/84)
SCATTERGRAM OF (DOWN) SCORE TWO SCORE ON READING TEST
(ACROSS) GRADE GRADE IN ENGLISH COURSE
0.20 0.60 1.00 1.40 1.80 2.20 2.60 3.00 3.40 3.80
35.00
31.90
28.80
25.70
22.60
19.50
16.40
13.30
10.20
7.10
4.00
0.00 0.40 0.60 1.20 1.60 2.00 2.40 2.80 3.20 3.60 4.00
93
95+
18+
43
68+
18+
31
29
6


PLACEMENT TEST SCORES
03/29/84 PAGE 3
FILE NONAME (CREATION DATE = 03/29/84)
SCATTERGRAM OF (DOWN) SCORE ONE SCORE ON GRAMMAR TEST (ACROSS) GRADE GRADE IN ENGLISH COURSE
0.20 0.60 1.00 1.40 1.80 2.20 2.60 3.00 3.40 3.80
40.00
36.60
33.20
29.80
26.40
23.00
19.60
16.20
12.80
9.40
6.00
0.00 0.40 0.80 1.20 1.60 2.00 2.40 2.80 3.20 3.60 4.00
49
61+
165+
90+
91+
132+
21
1
22

Other Factors

Discrepancies in grading policies is not necessarily the only factor which could have scewed the results. There are several other factors which may have contributed to variances in grades and test scores. They include:

1. At present, there are no security measures enforced when students take the placement test to prove that they are the person they purport to be. Students may be taking the test for their friends, thus distorting the data -- yielding high test scores, yet very low course performance.

2. The test may be compromised resulting in high test scores, with poor corresponding performance in an English course.

3. There is a certain margin of error in placing the placement test data into the system. The score on the test is manually written at the top of the test form, input into the system by a clerk, and picked up by the SPSS program. Errors in this process may cause a small distortion of the data.

4. There is no guarantee that because a student does well on a placement test, he/she will necessarily be motivated to excel in a classroom environment. Many students are very bright but not instructionally motivated.

Other Factors (cont)

5. There are a variety of personal reasons which may contribute to a student's poor class performance, including job demands, family commitments, health, and so on.

6. Many will argue that placement tests such as these, when utilized alone, are not necessarily a predictor of academic success.

7. The validity and reliability of the test instrument has been questioned.[2]

2 The English Placement test is currently under review by the UCLA Center for the Study of Evaluation.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The same four statistical tests (as listed on page 4) were performed on the following demographic groups:

AGE

GENDER

ETHNICITY

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION STATUS

CAMPUS OF ENROLLMENT

The purpose of testing the demographic groups was to determine if there were significant differences in test scores and course performance between the different sub-groups within each demographic group. A summary of the results follows.

DEMOGRAPHICS (cont)

Age

The age of each student was divided into six categories:

Under 20

20 - 25

26 - 30

31 - 35

36 - 40

Over 40

Tests were performed only on those students in each of the age groups who received an A - F in an English course.

The results indicate that students in the "Under 20" age group had a significantly lower mean grade (2.32) than did all other age groups. However, the mean test score of the group of students under 20 years old was the second highest for both the reading (21.30) and grammar (23.71) tests. In addition, the statistical analysis demonstrated that there was not a significant difference between age groups for mean placement test scores. (See outline on page 42).

Age (cont)

A complete summary of the grades for each age group is listed on page 43. A review of the statistics indicates that 35% of the "Over 40" age group received A's and B's in English, which was higher than any other group. The students under 20 years old and those 20 - 25 years old received the smallest percentage of A's and B's (26.8%) and the students 31 - 35 years old had the highest percentage of drops and withdrawals (50.2%)

The test score data reveals the fact that 40.8% of the students 20 - 25 years old scored higher than 25 on the **grammar test.** The "Over 40" category had the smallest percentage of students who scored greater than 25 on the test (27.7%). On the **reading test,** the 26 - 30 year old age group had the highest percentage of students who scored more than 25 (36.6%) and, as with the grammar test, the students "Over 40" had the smallest percentage of those who scored over 25 on the reading test (27.1%).

AGE

Students Receiving "A through F" in English

GROUP	AGE	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	MEAN GRADE	MEAN GRAMMAR SCORE	MEAN READING SCORE
1	Under 20	726	2.32	23.71	21.30
2	20 - 25	846	2.56	23.00	21.11
3	26 - 30	368	2.72	23.21	21.73
4	31 - 35	181	2.82	22.82	20.72
5	36 - 40	98	2.88	23.93	21.17
6	40 +	172	2.83	23.09	20.23

Differences Between Groups

Significant difference between: Group 1 (Under 20) and all other groups	No significant difference between groups	No significant difference between groups

AGE

Grade Distribution

	UNDER 20 %	20 - 25 %	26 - 30 %	31 - 35 %	36 - 40 %	40+ %
A	6.5	10.5	12.2	13.5	19.2	18.2
B	20.4	16.3	17.4	13.5	11.2	17.5
C	21.4	12.6	9.5	9.0	6.7	10.2
D	6.3	4.5	3.3	2.2	2.2	4.0
F	4.2	3.3	3.0	2.5	4.5	3.1
INC	2.3	2.1	1.0	2.2	1.3	2.2
DROP	17.2	26.8	28.0	28.5	30.8	23.4
W	19.9	20.6	21.0	21.7	17.4	14.5
CR	1.3	2.7	4.2	6.1	4.9	5.8
NC	.4	.7	.5	.9	1.8	1.2
TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS:	1235	1794	811	446	224	325

Ethnicity

The students were categorized into the following ethnic groups based on the self-response college application:

AMERICAN INDIAN

ASIAN

BLACK

WHITE

HISPANIC

FILIPINO

OTHER

Tests show that the White students had a significantly higher mean grade (2.64) than did the Black (2.26) and Hispanic (2.26) students. Furthermore, there was a significant difference between the grammar test score of the Asian students and the grammar test scores of the American Indian, Black, White, Hispanic and Filipino students; and between the White students and the Asian, Black, Hispanic and "Other" students. The results for the reading test were similar. The Asian students scored significantly lower on the reading test than did all other groups; the White students scored significantly higher than the Asian, Black, Hispanic, Filipino, and "Other" students; and the mean score of the Black students was significantly lower than the American Indian students. For an outline of this data refer to the table on page 46.

Ethnicity (cont)

A review of the grade distribution data reveals the fact that the white students received the greatest percentage of A's and B's (33.3%). Additionally, the American Indian and "Other" students had the largest percentage of drops/withdrawals (54.7%).

A complete breakdown of the grade distribution is on page 47.

ETHNICITY

Students Receiving "A through F" in English

GROUP	ETHNIC BACKGROUND	MEAN GRADE	MEAN GRAMMAR SCORE	MEAN READING SCORE
1	American Indian	2.21	23.55	22.18
2	Asian	2.48	16.61	13.15
3	Black	2.26	19.92	16.96
4	White	2.64	26.09	24.49
5	Hispanic	2.26	20.73	17.84
6	Filipino	2.34	20.94	18.64
7	Other	2.15	18.96	17.32

Differences Between Groups

	Significant difference between:	Significant difference between:	Significant difference between:
	Group 4 (White) and Groups 3 & 5 (Black & Hispanic)	Group 2 (Asian) & Groups 1,3, 4,5,6 (Amer. Ind., Black, White, Hispanic & Filipino)	Group 2 (Asian) and all other groups
		Group 4 (White) & Groups 2,3,5 6,7 (Asian, Black, Hispanic, Filipino, Other)	Group 4 (White) & Groups 2,3,5,6,7 (Asian, Black, Hispanic, Filipino, Other)
			Group 1 & 3 (Amer. Ind. & Black)

ETHNICITY

Grade Distribution

	AMERICAN INDIAN %	ASIAN %	BLACK %	WHITE %	HISPANIC %	FILIPINO %	OTHER %
A	8.3	8.6	7.4	12.6	5.8	8.7	4.6
B	11.1	14.3	12.1	20.7	13.6	15.1	12.3
C	15.3	12.5	13.7	15.4	15.0	20.8	14.6
D	4.2	4.3	6.4	4.5	5.5	4.5	4.6
F	6.9	3.3	4.4	2.9	4.2	4.8	5.4
INC	1.0	.3	1.2	.3	.1	0	0
DROP	26.4	30.6	25.6	21.1	26.1	22.1	28.5
W	25.0	13.7	22.1	19.8	22.8	17.9	26.2
CR	1.4	10.3	4.7	.5	3.2	3.8	3.8
NC	1.4	1.4	.9	.2	1.4	1.0	0
TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS:	72	839	809	2987	807	312	130

Gender

A comparison of the male and female groups of students demonstrates that the females had a slightly higher mean grammar test score (23.72) than did the male students (22.70); whereas, the male students had a slightly higher mean reading score (21.35) than did the female students (20.67). In addition, the female students had a higher mean grade (2.64) than did the male students (2.37). The table which follows outlines the mean test scores and grades for both groups.

The distribution of grades indicates that the female students had a considerably larger percentage of A's and B's (30.17%) than did the male students (24.3%). The men, however, had a slightly higher percentage of drops/withdrawals (44.6%) than did the women (43.0%). The grade distribution for the students by gender is on page 50.

GENDER

Students Receiving "A through F" in English

GENDER	NUMBER	MEAN GRADE	MEAN GRAMMAR SCORE	MEAN READING SCORE
Male	1591	2.37	22.70	21.35
Female	1480	2.64	23.72	20.67

Differences Between Groups

No significant difference

GENDER

Grade Distribution

	MALE %	FEMALE %
A	8.5	11.9
B	15.8	18.2
C	15.5	14.5
D	5.8	3.8
F	4.2	2.7
INC	2.0	2.1
DROP	24.3	23.7
W	20.3	19.3
CR	2.9	3.1
NC	.7	.6
TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS:	3195	2895

High School Graduation Status

The students were divided into five (5) groups depending upon where they graduated from high school:

SAN DIEGO HIGH SCHOOL (SDHS)

CALIFORNIA HIGH SCHOOL (CAHS)

OUT-OF-STATE HIGH SCHOOL (OSHS)

OUT-OF-COUNTRY HIGH SCHOOL (OCHS)

DID NOT GRADUATE

The test results indicate that the students graduating from high school in another country had significantly lower mean test scores on both the reading (17.84) and grammar (14.68) tests than did all other groups. The students graduating from high school in San Diego had significantly lower reading and grammar mean test scores than did the students graduating out-of-state or from other California high schools. Further, the students who graduated from high school in another state had the highest mean reading and grammar test scores. A complete summary of these results is listed in the table on page 53.

A review of the distribution of grades for the various groups of students reveals that the students who did not graduate from high school, although consisting of only 19 students, had a 72% drop/withdrawal rate; and the

High School Graduation Status (cont)

students who graduated from high school in another country had a drop/withdrawal rate of 47%. The students who graduated from high school in another state had the largest percentage of A's and B's (38.2%); and the students who graduated from high school in San Diego had the largest percentage of D's and F's. The complete grade distribution for students in the different high school graduation categories is listed on page 54.

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION STATUS

Students Receiving "A through F" in English

GROUP	HIGH SCHOOL GRAD	MEAN GRADE	MEAN GRAMMAR SCORE	MEAN READING SCORE
1	San Diego High Schools	2.34	23.06	20.82
2	California High Schools	2.63	24.66	23.27
3	Out of State High Schools	2.91	25.75	23.98
4	Out of Country High Schools	2.53	17.84	14.68
5	Did Not Graduate*	2.75	19.75	15.75

* too small of a sample to be included in group comparisons

Differences Between Groups

Significant difference between: Group 3 (Out of State H.S. Grads) & Groups 1,2,4 (San Diego H.S. Grads,Calif H.S. Grads, & Out of Country H.S. Grads)	Significant difference between: Group 4 (Out of Country H.S. Grads) & Groups 1,2,3 San Diego H.S. Grads, Calif H.S. Grads, & Out of State H.S. Grads)	Significant difference between: Group 4 (Out of Country H.S. Grads) & Groups 1,2,3 San Diego H.S. Grads, Calif H.S. Grads, & Out of State H.S. Grads)
Group 1 (San Diego H.S. Grads) & Groups 2,3 (Calif. H.S. Grads & Out of State H.S.Grads)	Group 1 (San Diego H.S. Grads) & Groups 2,3 (Calif. H.S. Grads & Out of State H.S.Grads)	Group 1 (San Diego H.S. Grads) & Groups 2,3 (Calif. H.S. Grads & Out of State H.S. Grads)

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION STATUS

Grade Distribution

	SDHS %	CAHS %	OSHS %	OCHS %	DID NOT # GRADUATE %
A	7.2	11.8	19.1	10.0	0
B	16.7	19.9	19.1	13.3	16.7
C	17.6	14.7	11.5	9.9	5.6
D	5.7	4.3	3.1	3.9	0
F	4.1	2.8	2.1	3.9	0
INC	2.0	3.2	1.8	1.3	5.6
DROP	22.4	20.9	22.9	34.1	44.4
W	21.4	21.1	17.5	13.4	27.8
CR	2.3	1.0	2.3	8.7	0
NC	.6	.1	.5	1.6	0
TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS:	3484	678	1035	700	18

Campus

The 6,099 students were analyzed as a group and by campus of enrollment:

CITY COLLEGE

MESA COLLEGE

MIRAMAR COLLEGE

The analysis shows that the mean grades of the students were not significantly different between campuses. A review of performance on the grammar and reading tests reveals that the students at City College scored significantly lower on both tests, than did the students at Mesa and Miramar colleges. However, the students at City College had a higher mean grade (2.52) than did the students at Mesa (2.51) and Miramar (2.41).

The students at Mesa College had the highest percentage of A's and B's (30.0%) and the students at Miramar had the highest percentage of D's and F's (10.2%). The students at City College had the lowest percentage of students scoring higher than 25 on the reading test (17.8%) and Miramar College had the highest percentage (44.2%). At Mesa College, 36.6% of the students scored higher than 25. The students at Mesa College had the highest percentage scoring greater than 25 (46.5%) on the grammar test, and the lowest percentage above 25 was at City College (21.8%). Miramar College had 39.6% scoring above 25 on the grammar test.

Campus (cont)

Furthermore, the students at City College had a higher drop/withdrawal rate (47.8%) than did the students at Mesa College (41.1%) and Miramar College (41.2%).

A summary of the distribution of grades by campus is on page 58.

CAMPUS

Student Receiving "A through F" in English

GROUP	SITE	MEAN GRADE	MEAN GRAMMAR SCORE	MEAN READING SCORE
1	CITY	2.52	20.58	17.36
2	MESA	2.51	24.68	22.79
3	MIRAMAR	2.41	23.96	24.13

Differences Between Groups

No significant difference between groups	Significant difference between: Group 1 (City) & Groups 2 & 3 (Mesa and Miramar)	Significant difference between: Group 1 (City) & Groups 2 & 3 (Mesa and Miramar)

CAMPUS

Grade Distribution

	CITY %	MESA %	MIRAMAR %
A	10.1	10.5	8.2
B	13.1	19.5	20.0
C	12.1	17.4	14.6
D	4.0	5.4	5.6
F	3.5	3.4	4.6
INC	2.1	2.0	2.2
DROP	27.9	21.1	22.2
W	19.9	20.1	19.0
CR	6.0	.6	3.0
NC	1.3	.1	.6
TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS:	2503	3096	500

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **REVISE CUTOFF SCORES TO ALLOW FOR "GRAY AREAS" AND/OR BORDERLINE STUDENTS.**

At present, the cutoff scores for each category differ by only one point. There is no evidence at this time which demonstrates that these cutoffs are appropriate. The District should allow for "gray areas" and/or border-line students in the placement process. The analysis of the mean grades of the various ranges of test scores indicates that there is not a significant difference in the students' performance when scoring approximately 16 to 32 on the tests. Consequently, to justify a cutoff which is so specific is difficult without considering background information about the students.

At a recent visit to Mesa College, a representative from the College Board stated that the English Placement test is not "fine tuned" enough for the District's current cutoffs. The table on the following page delineates the differences between categories. As indicated, there is only a 1-point difference on both tests between Category 5 and Category 2.

The standard error of measurement for this type of test is greater than 1 point. Therefore, the cutoff scores do not allow for any leeway for careless errors and similar factors which may have at least a 1-point effect on a student's score.

ENGLISH PLACEMENT TEST CATEGORIES

CATEGORY	CUTOFF SCORES	DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CATEGORIES
5	Grammar: 22 or higher Reading: 23 or higher	
4	Grammar: 22 or higher Reading: 22 or lower	Same as Category 5, except reading score is 1 point less.
3	Grammar: 21 or lower Reading: 23 or higher	Same as Category 5, except grammar score is 1 point less. Same as Category 4, except grammar score is 1 point less; reading score is 1 point more.
2	Grammar: 21 or lower Reading: 22 or lower	Same as Category 3, except reading score is 1 point less. Same as Category 4, except grammar score is 1 point less. Same as Category 5, except grammar and reading score both are 1 point less.

2. **REDUCE THE NUMBER OF PLACEMENT CATEGORIES.**

As stated in recommendation #1, there is a very minimal difference between placement categories. After carefully reviewing the categories, and the fact that the test was not designed to be fine-tuned enough for these cutoffs, it appears that there should be a reduction in the number of categories, possibly to 3: Remedial - Skill/Competency Improvement - College Level Composition. This would allow for more flexibility in placing students in the appropriate classes.

3. **DEVELOP AND ENFORCE SECURITY MEASURES FOR THE TESTING PROCESS.**

At present, there is no required "proof" of identification prior to taking the test. Therefore, it would be very easy for a student to take the test for a friend and/or take a copy of the test. The security of the placement testing procedure should be considered and the student required to show some form of identification prior to testing.

An example of security measures for placement testing are:

- Student shows I.D. to Testing Clerk/Counselor
- Testing Clerk writes/verifies written I.D. number on test form
- Student takes Placement Test
- Testing Clerk verifies that I.D. number has not been altered and that all materials are turned in for each student at completion of test.

4. **REVIEW AND ALIGN THE COURSE OUTLINES FOR ENGLISH COURSES.**

Perhaps part of the problem with grading discrepancies is the fact that instructors may have different areas of emphasis in the same English course. For example, the same student could take English 101 from two different instructors who have different expectations of the students. In one course he/she may do well, yet in the other he/she may not. Consequently what is necessary, for appropriate placement of students, is consistency in course requirements and expectations.

5. **REDUCTION OF DROP/WITHDRAWAL RATES.**

Another area of concern is the fact that of 6,099 students analyzed, 19.8% withdrew and 24.0% dropped from English courses in Fall, 1983. The districtwide withdrawal rate for <u>all programs</u> in Fall 1983, was 24.1%. Given this information, one can accurately assess that nearly half of our students drop or withdraw from courses each semester. This is a troubling statistic and is very costly considering the administrative time and paperwork involved.

The California legislature directed the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges to develop a plan for student matriculation. An important aspect of "matriculation" is an agreement on the part of the student for "diligence in class attendance and completion of assigned coursework, **completion of courses**, and maintenance of progress

5. (cont)

toward an educational goal." Student matriculation is being discussed throughout the educational arena. The District should focus attention on student retention and develop a plan to reduce the excessive number of students who are enrolling and not completing their courses. Vital information such as the reasons for students dropping/withdrawing (academic failure, "shopping around," problems with the instructor, class difficulty, etc.) as well as the students' background should be analyzed. Given mandatory fees, program cutbacks, and other problems facing the community colleges, student retention should be a priority.

6. **CREATION OF TWO (2) EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS OF STUDENTS TO FURTHER ANALYZE PLACEMENT TESTING AS AN EFFECTIVE MEANS.**

Further analysis of the effectiveness of the District placement program should be conducted with smaller experimental groups of students. The first group would be a random selection of students whose scores and grades are analyzed together with transcripts, personal data, and any other information available. The second group would be similar students in terms of academic and demographic characteristics, whose test scores and grades are analyzed without any background information.

A comparison of these two experimental groups of students would enable a more accurate assessment of:

6. (cont)

a. whether the placement test is an appropriate measure of academic success;

b. to what extent a student's background and personal life affect academic achievement;

c. the levels at which students are able to benefit from college English;

d. local norms; and

e. test reliability and validity (students could be tested more than one time).

7. REVIEW OF THE PLACEMENT TEST INSTRUMENT

The District should consider a careful review of each item on the placement test in relation to course content for each of the various English courses. The extent to which the test measures the skills required for each course could be accurately assessed.

The College Board provides a listing of the specific "skills" which are measured by each question. This data should be reviewed by members of the English Department, as well as experts in the field, to determine:

a. the degree to which the test questions measure each skill; and

b. if there is an appropriate emphasis on the test for the skills required for a specific course. For example: perhaps vocabulary is very important for a certain course, yet only two test questions are specifically related to vocabulary.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of a placement program is to guide students into the appropriate level of courses, given the diversity of our student population and variety of educational levels.

The San Diego Community College District has put forth much effort in making the placement program work.

It is the intent of this study to provide key policymakers with a data base to assist in the decision-making process and to help initiate change in a college environment which is continually changing.

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